

Subject: EL SAMURAI! killed right there by SHINJIRO OHTANI! YOMIKO HOTTA! doesn't kick KYOKO INOUE!'s ass nearly enough. MIMA SHIMODA! wears her little ... pants... and DICK TOGO! unleashes the DICKMANIA!

ALOHA~!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #51!

It's gonna be a special week. I'm on a working vacation this week, in that my wife will be writing a paper and studying for a midterm as she works for her second masters degree, and I got a week off from the office and will be watching the lil punkin until Thursday, when vacation in the Griswold sense of the word kicks in and we head to the fabulous mountains. Thus, I'm basically being paid to watch wrestling videos and lay around with the youngster as she menaces the dogs. So I'm a do one a day until Thursday at least. WHOMP ASS!

I've been watching half hour wads off the GARGANTUAN tape that man among men, Glenn, sent me (nCo Lucha should be at your door any minute. Don't miss the amazingly weird quote from Vampiro in 1993. WOO-HOO!) and I finally sat down and started watching it in it's entirety (hey! Spelling Shmelling) and Golly! There is some KICK ASS grappling a goin on on that baby.

!!!!!!ALL JAPAN WOMEN 8/20/97 Budokan

Manami Toyota vs Aja Kong was good- in that Manami ain't afraid to take a man-sized beating and still look semi-convincing coming out of it. This was a little less than the one's I've seen from the last couple of years, but it still a pretty classic match-up, as Aja can sell any spot that Manami can come up with and Manami can hang tough when the spinning-back roundhouses start kicking in, and- by the end- they are kicking in aplenty. This had the classic Puroresu Time Limit Draw psychology going for it to keep one from thinking that one was cheated- in that Aja is kicking the paste outta Toyota so much at the end, you're glad the bell saves her. Manami hits her usual beautiful array of gorgeous suplexes and doesn't botch any highspots (maybe a sign of healthiness, for once, in two years). This was spunky and Manami was all sassy, so I got to give it a thumbs up even if it isn't the technical masterpiece that their other matches have been. Ah, what the hell.

Yumiko Hotta vs Kyoko Inoue was very good, I guess. The phat and overrated Inoue just doesn't take a beating like a real built-for-Hotta opponent like Kansai, Yamada or even Toyota, would and she also doesn't look like real threat to the ultimate Alpha Female Hotta so this is only gonna get so good. Toyota can pull it off because she can use decent psychological ploys to make it look credible, using her speed like in that hh match I've seen where Toyota uses a lucky super highrisk highspot to the floor to set up an opening to use her suplexes to make the win look credible. Inoue is a little too pudged out (or cheesecake-enhanced) to make that look credible, because I remember the ThunderQueen match where Inoue took it like a champ. Inoue is too big to look crafty and not physical enough to come close to looking legitimate against the machine that is Hotta. Kansai could do it, because she is a sister-machine and

Yamada isn't a machine but kicks real fu8king hard, so it looked good. This match is basically Inoue trying to slow down the inevitable, using her rather weak looking ground game (but in an attempt to be a semblance of fair, Hotta would look just as weak if she had to wrestle Inoue's highflying style). The problem is that if you are gonna try to make this work as a Hotta-style match and not a Kyoko-style match, Kyoko would have to take a truly phat-ass beating which wasn't forthcoming. Instead, we get kind of a Masa Chono vs Scott Norton match, which isn't good for anyone watching or participating. I dunno. Inoue doesn't even get kicked in the face. In a Hotta match! How can I like this?

Mita/ Mima Shimoda vs Maekawa/ Tomoko Watanabe was number one and the best! on this show. The phat and underrated Watanabe has become the 1997 Woman's version of El Samurai- a previously real good all-around wrestler who has suddenly felt the heat and has stepped up to the plate to deliver big-time this year. She has definately shed the cutesy image and has lost the cretin fringe and has become a very interesting wrestler to watch. Maekawa looked almost big time in this match, which is a first for the young punk. She gets the luxury of having the hottest tag-team in women's wrestling to actually sell for her and that goes a long way in changing her image as Hotta-wannabe undersized youngster to woman who belongs in the ring with the gals with the little... pants. WOO-HOO! Mita and Shimoda are GREAT as HotPants Wearing Ultra-Vixens. Shimoda is SO Russ Meyers-esque when she's pummeling Maekawa with all the furniture in the building. Watanabe takes Mita's Death Valley Bomb like a QUEEN and delivers one of the more fabulous Thunder Fire PowerBombs that you will see. Watanabe makes this TOTALLY King-Size. Get all this.

@@@@@@ Jd' SPECIAL taped on 6/22

Abe/ Kosugi vs La Infernal/Nefataly is the second match on this special from the august upstart women's organization that is the stomping ground for Lioness Aska and Bison Kimura. The first match was AMAZINGLY bad so I guess Glenn spared them embarrassment of including them on the matchlist. :) This match was no walk in the park either, but La Infernal has a Gigantic Butt and it's neat to see how she will disguise it each tape. She's actually not a horrible worker, but she ain't good enough to carry what she given to work with in Jd' so her matches aren't very good usually and this is no exception.

Cooga vs Sogabe was actually REALLY good by Jd' standards- which means it wasn't overly, horribly sloppy and they worked faster than 3/4 speed. Cooga isn't good but there are worse wrestlers. Sogabe is spunky and didn't mess anything up which is quite a feat for one so green. Cooga wins somehow. Please don't make me watch it again.

Jaguar Yokota vs Sakai: HEY! Sakai Queen of the Judo Girls has a good little match as venerable Jaguar takes her by the hand and leads her through this match. Sakai is really green but has grown by leaps and bounds since her last match, as she sells pretty well as Jaguar basically Verne Gagne-izes her and stretches her every which a way. Sakai gets in offense here

and there, as Jaguar is careful not to get the rookie into any situation that would make the spunky little judo-fireball look bad. Sakai hits a neat climbing cross-armbreaker and Jaguar counters her next attempt with a fall away slam. Jaguar is great in this match, taking it to me mat old-style and getting the youngster a good actual match under her belt before polishing her off. I was digging it the most.

Yuki Lee/ the Goddess Shiratori/ Bison Kimura vs The Bloody Phoenix/ Ryura/ Lioness Aska was actually really good until Bison Kimura goes and breaks her arm. Shiratori is so dang good-lookin' and she sells for the less-aesthetically gifted members of the opposition for much of the beginning of the match. She has a little comeback- as much as her cuddly but limited arsenal will allow- and tags in Bison who gets some offense in before Phoenix blows a Moonsault Press and lands real badly on Bisons awkwardly positioned arm. After that, they kinda wrestle around for a while directionlessly until Lioness hits her powerbombs and they wrap it up.

This was real close to being good, but the unfortunate circumstances of the final match keeps this from being of interest to anyone with a simple passing interest and not really into the development of some rookies that look to be good in a little while. Still, this is better than most Jd' efforts.

NEW JAPAN TV 9/6/97 G1 Climax

Tenzan vs Hashimoto was better than the IWGP match they had, but HELL! a New Blackjacks vs DOA match would be better than that. Tenzan uses a very flying-headbutt based offense on the fabulous Hashimoto and Hash shows lots of fighting spirit and what-not. Hash never really pummels Tenzan and Tenzan never really gets off any hot-moves at all, but this is a decent match as was in this tournament. Chono is neat as the cool looking distraction that gives Tenzan the upperhand. Tenzan hits a whole lot of headbutts to put Hash away cleanly (which I was actually wondering if a screwy ending was on our hands.) Eh. I've seen worse.

Sasaki vs Norton was actually kinda good in a power wrestling that doesn't take up a lot of time kinda way. Sasaki and Norton trade some pretty stiff shots- with Norton hitting a monster powerbomb and Sasaki hitting two fat-ass Northern Lights bombs. Neither sold well, but you try to get what you can out of the NJ Heavyweight division of stiffs and roid monsters, so how can I complain?

Tenzan vs Sasaki was the final of the tourney and I thought it was the best match they've had on Nitro all year. Tenzan does the crappiest Northern Lights Bomb these eyes have ever seen, but other than that, he was fine in this match as the far more over upstart and defender of the nWo namesake. Sasaki was actually kind of interesting in this as he punched the crap out of Tenzan a whole lot and did his little power arsenal. Tenzan bleeds hardway (which ya gotta love) and the whole thing is over in eight minutes as Sasaki hits another top shelf Northern Lights Bomb.

Overall, the highlights of the tourney were, of course, BUFF, while Kojima had some good moments as he continues his climb to becoming the shit. The weird thing is that if you add it up, Tensan was the Most Valuable Player, having a decent match against Hash and delivering as much as could be expected against Sasaki, which adds to the really good bizarro intriguing match against Yasuda (Pete Stein is digging it the most!) to make Tensan G-1 97 All-Star Material. Sasaki wasn't horrible either in this , which surprised a Sasaki detractor like myself.

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ ALL JAPAN TV 9/7/97

Misawa vs Akiyama takes up the whole half hour and this wasn't great but it wasn't horrible by any stretch of the imagination. Akiyama is going through a hippy phase it looks like- as his hair is growing to his ears and you can't see his scalp anymore. Anyway, this is basically Kobashi vs Misawa by numbers, with the added detraction of flowerchild Akiyama not being close to being as high up the pole as Kobashi. Akiyama hits a few awesome Exploder (renamed Terrapin Station) Suplexes that put the Man on his head. He gets the former Tiger Mask II in a Northern Lights Suplex without the floatover this time (which would have been the Wake-and-Bake FloatOver suplex, I'm to understand) Misawa elbows him for a while and hits a Released and unreleased German Suplex to get Captain Trips Akiyama to the point where he can show his fighting spirit and what-not, but without the uncool Kobashi crying and whining, Thank God. He does this by starting off with an Apron To The Floor Jumbo Tsuruta High Knee (which he calls the Lucifer Sam Siam Cat Knee Lift, I believe) and goes into some R\$EALLY nasty armbar DDT's (His famous Inna-Godda-Da-DDT). Misawa puts the One Who Freaks Freely away with consecutive Pearl River Plunges (Jesus! That was fun!), thus showing how low on the food-chain the surly Akiyama actually is. Misawa leaves the ring by telling the young punk to get a haircut and real job. Akiyama tells the man to blow it out his ass. I think. It was late.:) Misawa should have given Akiyama more and both could have been a little less listless. People can rate this with stars!

&&&&&MICHINOKU; PRO CHAMP FORUM 9/6/97

Gran Hamada vs Funaki was good if unspectacular. Hamada refuses to act his age and continues to be entertaining and great role model for we old folks who have to deal with surly, foule-ing punks not unlike the really good Funaki. They take it to the mat and Hamada gets all old-school to counteract the shoot-style leaning of the former BattlARTS boy that is Funaki. Funaki cheats a whole lot, which is cool- finding new ways to choke the old guy. Hamada hits his beautiful spinning DDT and I always will love it, even if he wrestles until he is Baron Von Raschke-esque. Funaki wins by cheating like a little punk son of a bitch. Which is a beautiful effect to achieve.

Hoshikawa/ Yakushiji vs Men's Teioh/ Dick Togo made me cry in the wake of its TRUE GREATNESS. Dick Togo has a new shirt he's wearing to the ring with the image of his temporary mask Skull underneath the words DICK MANIA! Abe Fukkin Vagoda, who the hell do

I have to kill to get one of those? JEEZEUS! Men's Teioh has become the Fuerza Guerrera of Michinoku Pro as Dick Togo relinquishes the role to assume the role of DEAN'S PERSONAL ROLE MODEL of MP. This match is a perfect Rudo Caida with the added extra of the very UnMexican doubleteam maneuver of Togo's Released German Suplex directly into a Tieoh Dangerous Backdrop. BOY! I never saw Appollo Dantes and Gran Markus pull that off in tandem. Both youngsters get a dose of that baby and they are not digging it the most. Togo tries to get the hot, sexy, fresh-faced Hoshikawa to crawl through his legs, which pisses off both of these young saving graces of the incredibly injured and turmoiled (huh?) promotion. Hoshikawa hits the CHOICE apron to the floor spin kick onto Tieoh. Togo beats the holy shit out of Yakushiji and then they concentrate on the charred remains of Hoshikawa. Togo pins him with a PHAT ASS senton and they slap him around and cut his hair and taunt him, which hopefully sets up Tieoh vs Hoshikawa Hair-vs-Hair (which would kick my ass with its rugged stiffness and make the wait for the return of Delfin and Naniwa less painful.) WHIP ASS! You want all this just for the T-Shirt alone.

Sasuke vs Super Boy - quasi impromptu ladder match (TM-GLENN!). This should have never seen the light of day. This is not good. I can't figure it out. It has nothing spectacular with the ladder except SuperBoy killing himself attempting a moonsault that he doesn't time well and lands directly on his shoulder. The rest is a clinic in blown spots and weak ladder shots. UG!

^^^^GRUPO REVOLUCION 9/13/97 Champ Forum

Olympico/ Astro Rey Jr./Solare/ Fantasy/ Dr. Cereburo vs Judo Suwa/ Sumo Fuji/ Shima Nobunaga/ Magnum Tokyo/ TAKA Michinoku: You don't want to watch a tape with Dr. Cerebero on it without some kind of warning. It's Amazing. I mean AMAZING. ABSOLUTELY AMAZING. He wears an outfit that is identical to the plain white outfit and mask that Dr. Wagner wears BUT.... with a mask with an EXPOSED BRAIN on top. I think me and Tim Noel actually laughed till we cried when it dawned on us it what exactly we were looking at. It was a magic moment which makes up for ANY shortcomings in the wrestling in this match. TAKA doesn't do much and I can't tell the Grupo rookies apart. I hope Magnum Tokyo was the good one with the purple mask because I would really hate for such a cool name to be wasted on one of the lesser shlubs in this match. GET ALL THIS!

^^%^^%^^%^^%NEW JAPAN TV 9/13/97

Shinjiro Ohtani vs El Samurai is freaking great. There are minor flaws that keep it from being higher than number three on the El Samurai Monster Matches of 1997 cavalcade but Kanemoto and Takaiwa had such transcendently fabulous matches that anything less than perfect would make the comparison less than favorable. Ohtani starts off making a go of it, as NJ Camera Crews catch the perfect moment of impact as Shinjiro drops kicks El's face as he is in the Tree of Woe, which tops Kanemoto simply kicking the hell out of El's face as he was in the same situation. He proceeds to lose points for doing a Road Warrior Hawk level no-selling of two

neck-breakers. He gets back in the race by trading face scapes in the corner with El and then hits the choice drop kick in the face of El's to drive Matsuda's face into the ringpost. Ohtani hits a fabulous on-the-apron German suplex, into a powerbomb where he starts losing on points- as he is getting a two count, he starts in with the Kobashi-style crying. He then hits a choice springboard missile dropkick into a German suplex for a two count without the whining. El hits an ASS STOMPING released German Suplex which Ohtani makes look godlike. He then gets in a springboard leg-lariat for a two count where he makes the whiniest face ever in a wrestling ring. I'd hate to watch OLD YELLER with Ohtani. I can imagine what a blubbing wreck he would be by the traumatic ending. He then does that multiple times trying the corner move that he's been doing since the UD match at J-Crown Tourney which he turns into a hurricanrana which he follows up with THE MOST HELLISH SPRINGBOARD DDT EVER! OF ALL TIME! For some reason, Ohtani feels the need to Dragon- suplex the corpse of El Samurai and get the J-Crown. This was freakin Choice. Ohtani is the king and El Samurai is the KING. The more I see El Samurai sell these TRULY HELLISH Finishers (Reverse Hurricanrana, Top Rope Death Valley Driver, this Springboard DDT) the more I'm thinking that El is developing a Foleylike addiction to insanely dangerous highspots. This division is so white hot right now and the highflying is basically gone. Now it's just stiff and hellish and beautiful- the way wrestling should be.

Don Frye vs Cal Wortham was neat but not as insanely hot as the Frye debut. Frye is still the ugly American and this was actually better in the ring than the debut. Frye is SO custom made for New Japan right now. No Ogawa or threats to Inoki this time around.

Kojima/ Nakanishi vs Yamazaki/ Sasaki was GREAT! Sasaki got all inspired by the big kicks that Yamazaki was doling out and actually looked okay getting all intense on Kojima and Nakanishi. Kojima is halfway to great; Nakanishi is halfway to good. I want the ending.:)

TOMORROW! More Hot WRESTLING Reviewing Action! Lance Storm vs Danny Collins Jr in Germany! LUCHA LUCHA LUCHA! ECW! ECW! ECW! USWA!USWA!USWA!USWA!

NANIWA~!

Dean Rasmussen, Who digs it when Benoit drags Hennig to a good match and breaks his nose.